

Hobbies

Switzerland's stamps promote the nation's artistic and cultural history

By Dominic Sama

Switzerland is not shy about using stamps to promote its culture and history. Each year, in fact, the Swiss Post Office issues semipostals, known as Pro Patria ("For our country"), with themes that change every few years.

The Swiss recently issued four Pro Patria semipostals, continuing the series begun last year highlighting 700 years of art and culture. The stamps reproduce paintings—also known as pictori-

al chronicles—of events in Swiss history.

The 35-plus-15-centime depicts King Friedrich II of Frankfurt-on-Main presenting a document in 1218 to the representative of Bern, proclaiming the city's independence. The chronicle was compiled in 1470 by Bendicht Tschachtlan.

The 50-plus-20-centime stamp shows Capt. Adrian von Bubenberg astride a white charger at the town gate of Murten, where he repelled the advance of Charles the Bold, the duke of

Burgundy, in 1476. The chronicle by Diebold Schilling was completed in 1483. Reproduced on the 80-plus-40-centime stamp, is a chronicle by artist Gerold Edlibach, painted in the late 1400s. It depicts a messenger from Lucerne handing a letter to the council representative of Zurich in 1443. The scene is an episode in a territorial dispute between Zurich and Schwyz that led to war.

The 90-plus-40-centime stamp shows a self-portrait of curate Diebold Schilling, in clerical robes, presenting a tome to the

mayor and councilors of Lucerne in the early 1500s. Completed in 1513, the chronicle is in the Lucerne Central Library.

As usual with semipostals, 90 percent of the surcharge (the second numeral in the denomination) will go to the National Day Collection for social work and to aid mothers. The remaining 10 percent will be used for cultural and social work.

The Swiss Post Office also has issued two Europa commemoratives on children's games, the theme of this year's series. The 50-centime stamp shows a little girl playing hopscotch with pebbles on chalked numbered squares. The 90-centime stamp shows a blindfolded child playing the game of blind man's bluff.

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